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The Annual Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs: Revisiting the Key to the United States Congressional Serial Set, 1824–1920

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Abstract

The Annual Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, for the years 1824 through 1920, described the interactions between the American Indian tribes and the federal government. J. A. Jones (Jones, J. A. (1955). Key to the annual reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. *Ethnohistory, 2*, 58–64) provided a key to these documents found in the *United States Congressional Serial Set*, but this tool contained a number of errors. This article provides a fresh look at this key, with particular focus upon the availability of these materials through the Readex *Serial Set* digital collection.

Keywords: Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, American Indians, *United States Congressional Serial Set*

More than a half century ago, Jones (1955) published a key to the Annual Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs that identified the location of these materials within the *United States Congressional Serial Set*. These Reports formed part of the annual message delivered by the President, or as Interior Department responses by the Secretary.[2] In that listing and for the years 1825 through 1920, Jones provided the *Serial Set* volume, and starting page, numbers for the versions of Senate and/or of House of Representatives documents that contained those communications. As he noted in the attendant history, on occasion, there was no duplication of the annual text and then, in 1838, there was the introduction of a third, Departmental edition of these materials as well.[3] After 1920, the Commissioner's Report did not appear in the *Serial Set*.[4]

The War Department was responsible for Indian Affairs between 1789 and 1848,[5] and produced departmental Annual Reports beginning in 1823 (see, for example, Accounts of superintendents and agents for Indian Affairs, 1834). The *Checklist of the United States Public Documents, 1789–1909* (1911, pp. 1201–1210) enumerates the relevant *Serial Set* volume numbers for the early years, but there is no breakdown provided for sections like Commissioner's Reports. In 1849, the Indian Affairs Office of the Department of the Interior began to publish Annual Reports that included data on its newly acquired tribal responsibilities.[6] The *Checklist* again (pp. 493–494) displays the evolution of this publication, and it is here that the differences between the internal and the external versions, particularly after 1897, may be noted.

Absent 1853, 1857, and 1859, Johnson (1977, p. 465) identified the *Serial Set* volumes for the years between 1832 and 1898 that contained the Annual Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, but denoted little beyond the provenance of the documents. Tate (1978, p. 288), inter alia, remarked upon the general usefulness of Johnson's listing, and classified it as "the best single guide to nineteenth century Indian materials within the Serial Set."

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[2] See Hill (1981) for a guide to additional information, held by the National Archives, on the activities of the Commissioners of Indian Affairs.

[3] Jones remarked that this approach of publishing triplicates of the Annual Reports lasted through 1858, except—as the Table 1 indicates—for the year 1848 when no Senate version was produced.

[4] One interesting demonstration of the culmination of the Annual Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs may be seen in the *CIS U.S. Serial Set Index* for the years 1915–1925. The Subject Index for this period indicates, under the heading "Indian Affairs Office," the *Serial Set* volume numbers for the Annual Reports of the Commissioner and that these appeared only through 1920 (1979; 64th–68th Congress volume, part I, p. 502). Examination under the heading "Interior Department" (p. 517) yields a similar list for the Annual Reports of the Secretary of the Interior, with the same final year of publication. In all cases, the Secretary's Annual Report appeared in the *Serial Set* volume just prior to the one for the Commissioner's message. After 1920, there are no account entries under these headings for either official.

[5] An act to establish an Executive Department, to be denominated the Department of War (1789, p. 50; emphasis added) declared that "the Secretary for the Department of War, who shall perform and execute such duties as shall from time to time be enjoined on, or entrusted to him by the President of the United States, agreeably to the Constitution, relative to military commissions, or to the land or naval forces, ships, or warlike stores of the United States, or to such other matters respecting military or naval affairs, as the President of the United States shall assign to the said department, or relative to the granting of lands to persons entitled thereto, for military services rendered to the United States, *or relative to Indian affairs*."

[6] The Secretary of the Interior was authorized in 1849, through An act to establish the Home Department, and to provide for the Treasury Department an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, and a Commissioner of Customs (p. 395), to "exercise the supervisory and appellate powers now exercised by the Secretary of War Department, in relation to all the acts of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs."

In addition, the *CIS U.S. Serial Set Index* (1975–1979) has been used extensively to identify the appropriate volumes for almost any Congressional subject, but for many years, regardless of the bibliographic assistance used, many researchers investigated Indian Affairs in the *Set* through the microopaque version produced by Readex Microprint. Jones' index was—and remains—particularly useful in conjunction with this collection to locate, for the full array of years through 1920, Commissioner of Indian Affairs materials within the *Serial Set*. Now, however, Readex has created a well-indexed, electronic version of the *Serial Set*, accessible through the World Wide Web, and the specific required volumes for the Annual Reports are available in digital format for study.[7] A keyed, selective search for specific Senate or House Documents means that the precise text may be retrieved very quickly now.

However, the 1955 Jones key has a number of errors. The Office of Indian Affairs was created within the War Department in 1824, but Jones did not include that year's Report in his list.[8] His text indicates that "[f]rom 1825 through 1837 (with one exception—1832) the reports were published in duplicate, once in the House of Representatives Documents, and once in the Senate Documents" (1955, p. 60). Inspection of his listing (p. 61), though, reveals that there was no Senate version for the year 1831 either.

The compilation also fails to show that, between 1847 and 1894, these materials were created as Senate and as House *Executive* Documents. This discrepancy is of limited importance with the correct *Serial Set* volume in hand, but with the development of digital collections, the correct document type expedites rapid retrieval. In the Readex *Serial Set* application, the required material may be returned through a "Publication Search" that uses the "Congress" identifier, along with the "Document Class" and its "Publication No." In the case of the first Annual Report that was conveyed through a Senate Executive Document in 1847, the issue is quite apparent: Senate Document No. 1 for the 30th Congress, 1st Session does not exist, while Senate Executive Document No. 1 does.

On top of these difficulties, there is a typographical error for one *Serial Set* volume number (for 1871, the correct number is 1505); several page number errors exist (for both chambers' Documents in 1830, 1853, and 1856; for the Senate Document in 1833; and for the House Document in 1866, 1867, 1869, 1888, 1890, and 1908 through 1920);[9] and there is a pair of reversed House Document numbers for the years 1918 and 1919 (it should be House Document 1455 and 409, respectively).

Kvasnicka and Viola (1979, pp. 357–364) created a directory similar to the one produced by Jones. It is more complete, through the addition of citation data for the 1824 Report, and the names of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs at the time of, and the page range(s) for, each Report. Yet, there are a few problems with this compilation as well. The page range for the 1825 Report fails to include two Statements on "requisitions drawn by the Secretary of War on the Treasury of the United States" and on statistics pertaining to Indian schools. In later years, the Reports became lengthy and moved away from the first, almost personal 1824 report delivered by Thomas L. McKenney,[10] so these page range data offer only a relative measure of yearly activity by Indian Affairs. In the years 1899 through 1905, Kvasnicka and Viola identified two volumes to convey the entire Annual Report of the Secretary, where only the first item of each of these pairs housed the Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs.[11] The 1906 Report was bound in a single tome. Kvasnicka and Viola, though, did not report page numbers for any of these eight publications. The cited page extent is incorrect for the 1833 Senate Document, and the starting page identifiers are wrong for the House Executive Documents for 1866, 1867, 1869, 1888, 1893, 1897, 1898, and 1909 through 1920.[12]

Finally, the *CIS U.S. Serial Set Index* too contains a few errors for these Reports:

- It identifies page 182 as the initial page for the 1833 Senate Document No. 1 in *Serial Set* volume 238 (1977; 1st–34th Congress volume, part I, p. 862). The correct page number is 168;
- The *Index* (p. 862) cites page 241 as the onset for the 1853 Commissioner's Report in both of the Senate and the House Executive Documents (*Serial Set* volumes 690 and 710). Page 241 does not exist in either document: each of the two Readex files returns a title page that has a hand written "242" on it. The actual text of the Report begins on page 243 and that page number has been used in Table 1;
- An entry, entitled "Appendix to Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs", is listed by the *Index* (p. 862) for page 238 of a subsection

[7] See the product description at http://0-www.newsbank.com/readex/

[8] Jones did state that the "first report of this Office appeared in 1825, embodied in the Secretary of War's annual report for the previous year" (1955, p. 59). Kvasnicka and Viola (1979, p. 357) noted this earlier material in their listing. The author of that 24 November 1824 document, Thomas L. McKenney (Viola, 1979), is not identified as the *Commissioner* in that Report. The first example of any administrative designation appeared in the 1830 Report, with a section entitled "Report from the Superintendent of Indian Affairs" (*Serial Set* volume 203, p. 160). The term "Commissioner of Indian Affairs" made its appearance in the 1833 Report (*Serial Set* volume 238, p. 168), following legislation in 1832 that created the position (An act to provide for the appointment of a Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and for other purposes, 1832). Samuel S. Hamilton (Edmunds, 1979) and Elbert Herring (Satz, 1979a) signed these latter two statements, respectively.

[9] Jones was inconsistent in selecting either the title page or the first page of text for volumes in his starting "Page" column. For all but the years 1866, 1867, and 1870, the first text page has been used throughout this article as the appropriate starting point. For the two House items in the years 1888 and 1890, the initial page of the Report is identified in the specified *Serial Set* document by roman numerals.

[10] Even this first Annual Report had a "Statement shewing the Amounts of Moneys drawn from the several Appropriations for Expenditures in the Indian Department" that McKenney signed (*Serial Set* volume 108, p. 108). This statement was not included within the page range in the Kvasnicka and Viola list.

[11] The *CIS U.S. Serial Set Index* lists the two volumes for the years 1899 through 1902 (1978; 55th-57th Congress volume, part I, pp. 302-303) and for 1903 through 1905 (1979; 58th–60th Congress volume, part I, p. 380). The second volume for these years was primarily devoted to the Annual Report of the Commissioner to the Five Civilized Tribes, and to other supporting materials. The Commission to the Five Civilized Tribes—known better as the Dawes Commission (Brown, 1940)—was activated in March 1893 (section 16 of An act making appropriations for current and contingent expenses, and fulfilling treaty stipulations with Indian tribes, for fiscal year ending June thirtieth, eighteen hundred and ninety-four) and terminated in June 1905 (page 1050 of An act making appropriations for the current and contingent expenses of the Indian Department and for fulfilling treaty stipulations with various Indian tribes for the fiscal year ending June thirtieth, nineteen hundred and six, and for other purposes). The *Serial Set* has a brief introductory statement about the onset of the Commission in the Secretary of the Interior's yearly remarks for 1893 (volume 3209, p. XXII) and a concluding statement in the 1905 report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs (volume 4959, p. 107). The second volume for 1905, i.e., number 4960, contains only a report of the Board of Indian Commissioners.

[12] As noted in the Jones section, the first non-table text page has been used throughout this article as the appropriate starting point, so many of these "errors" reflect nothing more than the practice by the three earlier authors of initializing their enumerations with the front page of the document, i.e., with the title page. The 1920 Report in *Serial Set* volume 7820 offers a useful model: the first physical page declares "Reports of the Department of the Interior;" two pages later there is an "Order of Arrangement of Annual Reports of Bureaus and Offices Not Included in Volume I," which is followed by a page announcing "Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1920." A blank page, three pages for the volume's "Contents," and another blank page then collectively precede the *text* of the "Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs" on page 7. This page number was entered in the "Initial text page" column of the Table for this 1920 Report. There is no identifiable "page 1" in this document.

Table 1. Annual reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, for the years 1824 to 1920, in volumes of the *United States Congressional Serial Set*.

Year	Congress/ session	Document identification	Initial text page	*Serial Set* and session volume numbers
1824	18-2	S. Doc. 1	106	108-1
1824	18-2	H. Doc. 2	106	113-1
1825	19-1	S. Doc. 2	89	125-1
1825	19-1	H. Doc. 1	89	131-1
1826	19-2	S. Doc. 1	507	144-1
1826	19-2	H. Doc. 2	507	148-1
1827	20-1	S. Doc. 1	144	163-1
1827	20-1	H. Doc. 2	140	169-1
1828	20-2	S. Doc. 1	92	181-1
1828	20-2	H. Doc. 2	76	184-1
1829	21-1	S. Doc. 1	160	192-1
1829	21-1	H. Doc. 2	160	195-1
1830	21-2	S. Doc. 1	160	203-1
1830	21-2	H. Doc. 2	160	206-1
1831	22-1	No Senate document	–	–
1831	22-1	H. Doc. 2	171	216-1
1832	22-2	No Senate document	–	–
1832	22-2	H. Doc. 2	159	233-1
1833	23-1	S. Doc. 1	168	238-1
1833	23-1	H. Doc. 1	168	254-1
1834	23-2	S. Doc. 1	237	266-1
1834	23-2	H. Doc. 2	240	271-1
1835	24-1	S. Doc. 1	273	279-1
1835	24-1	H. Doc. 2	260	286-1
1836	24-2	S. Doc. 1	380	297-1
1836	24-2	H. Doc. 2	367	301-1
1837	25-2	S. Doc. 1	525	314-1
1837	25-2	H. Doc. 3	565	321-1
1838	25-3	S. Doc. 1	440	338-1
1838	25-3	H. Doc. 2	410	344-1
1839	26-1	S. Doc. 1	327	354-1
1839	26-1	H. Doc. 2	327	363-1
1840	26-2	S. Doc. 1	228	375-1
1840	26-2	H. Doc. 2	228	382-1
1841	27-2	S. Doc. 1	251	395-1
1841	27-2	H. Doc. 2	229	401-1
1842	27-3	S. Doc. 1	377	413-1
1842	27-3	H. Doc. 2	370	418-1
1843	28-1	S. Doc. 1	262	431-1
1843	28-1	H. Doc. 2	269	439-1
1844	28-2	S. Doc. 1	305	449-1
1844	28-2	H. Doc. 2	299	463-1
1845	29-1	S. Doc. 1	448	470-1
1845	29-1	H. Doc. 2	448	480-1
1846	29-2	S. Doc. 1	214	493-1
1846	29-2	H. Doc. 4	214	497-1
1847	30-1	S. Exdoc. 1	734	503-1
1847	30-1	No Senate Appendix	–	–
1847	30-1	H. Exdoc. 8	734	515-2
1847	30-1	Appendix to H. Exdoc. 8 Appendices that follow	P. 238 of the p. 1369	515-2
1848	30-2	No Senate document	–	–
1848	30-2	H. Exdoc. 1	385	537-1
1849	31-1	S. Exdoc. 1, pt. 2	937	550-2
1849	31-1	H. Exdoc. 5, pt. 2	937	570-3
1850	31-2	S. Exdoc. 1	35	587-1
1850	31-2	H. Exdoc. 1	35	595-1
1851	32-1	S. Exdoc. 1, pt. 3	265	613-3
1851	32-1	H. Exdoc. 2, pt. 3	265	636-2
1852	32-2	S. Exdoc. 1, pt. 1	293	658-1
1852	32-2	H. Exdoc. 1, pt. 1	293	673-1
1853	33-1	S. Exdoc. 1, pt. 1	243	690-1
1853	33-1	H. Exdoc. 1, pt. 1	243	710-1
1854	33-2	S. Exdoc. 1, pt. 1	211	746-1
1854	33-2	H. Exdoc. 1, pt. 1	211	777-1
1855	34-1	S. Exdoc. 1, pt. 1	321	810-1
1855	34-1	H. Exdoc. 1, pt. 1	321	840-1
1856	34-3	S. Exdoc. 5, pt. 1	554	875-2
1856	34-3	H. Exdoc. 1, pt. 1	554	893-1
1857	35-1	S. Exdoc. 11, pt. 1	289	919-2
1857	35-1	H. Exdoc. 2, pt. 1	289	942-2
1858	35-2	S. Exdoc. 1, pt. 1	353	974-1
1858	35-2	H. Exdoc. 2, pt. 1	353	997-2
1859	36-1	S. Exdoc. 2, pt. 1	373	1023-1
1860	36-2	S. Exdoc. 1, pt. 1	235	1078-1
1861	37-2	S. Exdoc. 1, pt. 1	624	1117-1
1862	37-3	H. Exdoc. 1, pt. 2	169	1157-2
1863	38-1	H. Exdoc. 1, pt. 3	129	1182-3
1864	38-2	H. Exdoc. 1, pt. 5	147	1220-5
1865	39-1	H. Exdoc. 1, pt. 2	169	1248-2
1866	39-2	H. Exdoc. 1, pt. 2	Follows p. 24	1284-2
1867	40-2	H. Exdoc. 1, pt. 3	Follows p. 541	1326-3
1868	40-3	H. Exdoc. 1, pt. 2	461	1366-2
1869	41-2	H. Exdoc. 1, pt. 3	445	1414-3
1870	41-3	H. Exdoc. 1, pt. 4, vol. 1	Follows p. 463 of "Pensions"	1449-4
1871	42-2	H. Exdoc. 1, pt. 5, vol. 1	417	1505-3
1872	42-3	H. Exdoc. 1, pt. 5, vol. 1	391	1560-3
1873	43-1	H. Exdoc. 1, pt. 5, vol. 1	371	1601-4
1874	43-2	H. Exdoc. 1, pt. 5, vol. 1	313	1639-6
1875	44-1	H. Exdoc. 1, pt. 5, vol. 1	505	1680-4
1876	44-2	H. Exdoc. 1, pt. 5, vol. 1	381	1749-4
1877	45-2	H. Exdoc. 1, pt. 5, vol. 1	397	1800-8
1878	45-3	H. Exdoc. 1, pt. 5, vol. 1	439	1850-9
1879	46-2	H. Exdoc. 1, pt. 5, vol. 1	69	1910-9
1880	46-3	H. Exdoc. 1, pt. 5, vol. 1	83	1959-9
1881	47-1	H. Exdoc. 1, pt. 5, vol. 2	1	2018-10
1882	47-2	H. Exdoc. 1, pt. 5, vol. 2	1	2100-11
1883	48-1	H. Exdoc. 1, pt. 5, vol. 2	1	2191-11
1884	48-2	H. Exdoc. 1, pt. 5, vol. 2	1	2287-12
1885	49-1	H. Exdoc. 1, pt. 5, vol. 2	3	2379-12
1886	49-2	H. Exdoc. 1, pt. 5, vol. 1	79	2467-8
1887	50-1	H. Exdoc. 1, pt. 5, vol. 2	1	2542-11
1888	50-2	H. Exdoc. 1, pt. 5, vol. 2	v	2637-11
1889	51-1	H. Exdoc. 1, pt. 5, vol. 2	3	2725-12
1890	51-2	H. Exdoc. 1, pt. 5, vol. 2	iii	2841-12
1891	52-1	H. Exdoc. 1, pt. 5, vol. 2	3	2934-15
1892	52-2	H. Exdoc. 1, pt. 5, vol. 2	5	3088-13
1893	53-2	H. Exdoc. 1, pt. 5, vol. 2	5	3210-14
1894	53-3	H. Exdoc. 1, pt. 5, vol. 2	1	3306-15
1895	54-1	H. Doc. 5, vol. 2	1	3382-15
1896	54-2	H. Doc. 5, vol. 2	1	3489-13
1897	55-2	H. Doc. 5, pt. 2	1	3641-13
1898	55-3	H. Doc. 5, pt. 2	1	3757-15
1899	56-1	H. Doc. 5, pt. 2.1	1	3915-18
1900	56-2	H. Doc. 5, pt. 2.1	1	4101-27
1901	57-1	H. Doc. 5, pt. 2.1	1	4290-23
1902	57-2	H. Doc. 5, pt. 2.1	1	4458-19
1903	58-2	H. Doc. 5, pt. 2.1	1	4645-19
1904	58-3	H. Doc. 5, pt. 2.1	1	4798-19
1905	59-1	H. Doc. 5, pt. 2.1	1	4959-19
1906	59-2	H. Doc. 5, pt. 2	1	5118-15
1907	60-1	H. Doc. 5, pt. 1.2	3	5296-27
1908	60-2	H. Doc. 1046, pt. 1.2	3	5453-43
1909	61-2	H. Doc. 107, pt. 1, vol. 2	3	5747-44
1910	61-3	H. Doc. 1006, vol. 1.2	3	5976-32
1911	62-2	H. Doc. 120, vol. 1.2	3	6223-41
1912	62-3	H. Doc. 933, vol. 2	3	6409-43
1913	63-2	H. Doc. 1009, vol. 2	3	6634-37
1914	63-3	H. Doc. 1475, vol. 2	3	6815-30
1915	64-1	H. Doc. 90, vol. 2	3	6992-38
1916	64-2	H. Doc. 1899, pt. 2	3	7160-34
1917	65-2	H. Doc. 915, pt. 2	3	7358-28
1918	65-3	H. Doc. 1455, pt. 2	3	7498-29
1919	66-2	H. Doc. 409, pt. 2	3	7706-35
1920	66-3	H. Doc. 849, pt. 2	7	7820-26

following page 1369 within the Senate and House of Representatives versions of the 1847 Report (*Serial Set* volumes 503 and 515, respectively). The Appendix in fact exists only in the House account, and consists of a 12-page commentary by Thomas Fitzpatrick, the Indian Agent for the Upper Platte and Arkansas;[13]

- The starting pages for the 1869 and 1870 House Executive Docu-

[13] Hafen and Ghent (1931, p. 194, footnote 101) cited this report in their biography of Fitzpatrick, and they noted three other reports provided by Fitzpatrick in the Annual Reports for 1848 (p. 211, footnote 109; see *Serial Set* volume 537, pp. 470–473), for 1850 (p. 222, footnote 116; see *Serial Set* volume 587, pp. 50–56), and for 1851 (p. 225, footnote 119; see *Serial Set* volume 613, pp. 332–337).

ments begin two pages later than indicated by the *Index*, at page 445 and 463 (*Serial Set* volumes 1414 and 1449; 1977; 35th–45th Congress volume, part I, p. 543); and

- Beginning with 1881 and except for 1886, the *CIS* entries for the Annual Reports default to implied starting page number 1. The actual starting page is number 3 and v for the years 1885 and 1888 (1978; 46th–50th Congress volume, part I, p. 473), and page number 3, iii, 3, 5, and 5 for the years 1889 through 1893 (1978; 51st–54th Congress volume, part I, p. 441), respectively. For the years 1907 and 1908 (1979; 58th–60th Congress volume, part I, p. 380), the years 1909 through 1914 (1979; 61st–63rd Congress volume, part I, p. 381), and 1915 through 1919 (1979; 64th–68th Congress volume, part I, p. 502), the correct starting page is 3. The lone exception in this latter pattern occurs in 1920, when the text begins on page 7, as discussed in footnote 12.

1. A revised key

The *Serial Set* holds the primary documentation of United States history.[14] Unfortunately, very few libraries have a complete set of these materials and so an examination of many questions, pertaining to the Nation, has been impeded. Electronic access to the *Serial Set* means that issues linked to, or substantiated by, documents within the *Serial Set* may be investigated now, and the accessibility and speed afforded by digital collections make many tasks far more manageable.

These Annual Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs describe the efforts of the government and relate the conditions of the tribes during most of the nineteenth and the first part of the twentieth centuries. This rich source of materials provides a window upon the negotiations and the processes that were administered by the War Department, and then by the Department of the Interior. However, as noted earlier, most of these Reports were embedded in the annual messages delivered by the President—Table 1 indicates this pattern by the large, initial page number for each of the Reports through 1880[15]—and so a keyed approach to the appropriate volumes within the *Serial Set* yields the best return.

With the inconsistencies found in previous publications in mind, a fresh route to these Annual Report files was created to aid new investigations. The attached Table incorporates, for the years 1847 through 1894, the correct Document type, as noted in the Kvasnicka and Viola study. The Table has been expanded to reveal the 1824 Senate and the House of Representatives documents, and to show that there were no Senate documents for the years 1831 and 1832. It has also been enlarged to include the single Appendix to the Annual Report in 1847, and a remark has been added to indicate that the Senate did not have a similar Appendix in its *Serial Set* volume for that year. For those years in which the Commissioner's report was part of a *Serial Set* volume with multiple page ranges, such additional information in the Table entry will expedite item recovery—see, for example, the notations for the same Appendix to the House Executive Document in 1847; or for the House Executive Documents for 1866, 1867, and 1870.

After 1846, a Congressional session's materials began to subtend more than a single volume and this necessitated an improved method to identify individual parts of a publication. Readex has modified their records to include these data.[16] The appropriate session volume number has now been appended to the *Serial Set* number: from the 1890s forward, for example, the total number of volumes published during each session reliably exceeded a dozen. Further, when reflected in the Readex collection citations, specific *Serial Set* "Part" and "Volume" numbers have been added to the "Document" column to identify the correct section of a chamber's publication series.

Each of the 130 Annual Report files in Table 1 was retrieved from the Readex *Serial Set* digital collection by using the combined Congress-Document type–Publication Number search option. This electronic suite has the additional capability of *Serial Set* entries linked by Standing Committee. Thus, documents from the Senate or from the House Committee on Indian Affairs may be identified quickly, to supplement the findings obtained through the Annual Reports of the Department of War, or of the Interior.[17]

Additional subject headings within these pooled results may be browsed to focus on pertinent topics such as land leasing, Indian education, and citizenship. Two examples—one from each chamber—and one joint finding will illustrate these three specific research opportunities.[18]

The first illustration is the extensive, two-part *Report of the Committee on Indian Affairs, United States Senate, on the condition of the Indians in the Indian Territory, and other reservations*(1886) in which the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs presented heard testimony concerning land leases in Indian Territory and elsewhere. An earlier Senate resolution had requested data, from the Secretary of the Interior, on the assigned acreages, on the proposed usages, on the identity of the lessees, and on whether these activities were "conducive to the welfare of the Indians in said Territory or Indian reservations" (pt. 1, p. 3). The Senate received in response a *Letter from the Secretary of the Interior, transmitting, in compliance with Senate resolution of December 4, 1883, copies of documents and correspondence relating to leases of lands in the Indian Territory to citizens of the United States for cattle-grazing and other purposes*(1884). In subsequent testimony presented in the *Report*, many exchanges and supporting documents portrayed the role of a number of Commissioners of Indian Affairs in these land transactions.[19]

Second, and in a manner similar to their discussions on land leases, interactions between the House Committee on Indian Affairs and the Commissioner, regarding future educational prospects, may be seen, for instance, in the 27 March 1846 House Report No. 447 on the Stockbridge Indians (*Stockbridge Indians*, 1846). This document contains an 1844 response from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, T. Hartley Crawford, to an inquiry from the Senate about this tribe, in which he proposed that Congress should initiate action for "the

[14] See Imholtz (2003) for a history of the creation of the *Serial Set*.

[15] In 1881, the Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs appeared in the Report of the Secretary of the Interior, beginning on page 1, and this format endured thereafter. The sole aberrant year in this sequence—1886—resulted from a substantial opening remark by the Secretary of the Interior, Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus Lamar, appointed in 1885 by President Grover Cleveland (Murphy, 1973).

[16] We thank August A. Imholtz of Readex for his correspondence on this issue. The session volume number for each of these documents corresponds to the "Vol." column value for that item in the *CIS U.S. Serial Set Index*.

[17] For each item in the Table, the document class, publication number, and (when applicable) part number were taken from the returned digital record. This copying, though, leads to some differences. The title pages of the 1909 and the 1910 Annual Reports, in *Serial Set* volumes 5747 and 5976, each state "Administrative Reports. In 2 volumes. Volume II. Indian Affairs. Territories", yet the two Readex digital files are identified as "H. Doc. 107, pt. 1, vol. 2" and "H. Doc. 1006, pt. 1–2", respectively. The Table has entries in the former format, over the years 1880 through 1894 and for 1909. The latter, abbreviated style may be seen for the years 1899 to 1905, 1907, 1908, 1910, and 1911.

[18] The browse sequence for the first two subjects is very similar. For the Senate investigation into land leases, the term "U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on Indian Affairs" was used in conjunction with the Standing-Committee Author tab, followed by the selection of "Leases" from the available browse options. Twenty-one items—through 30 June 1920 and presented in the final Annual Report—were identified in this manner. In the same way, fifty-five education-related documents were found, through the process of selecting "U.S. Congress. House. Committee on Indian Affairs" from the Standing-Committee Author array, and then choosing the "Indian education" option.

[19] Four Commissioners were part of these materials in Part 1 of the *Report*: Ezra A. Hayt (Meyer, 1979), Roland E. Trowbridge (Goldman, 1979), Hiram Price (O'Neil, 1979), and John D. C. Atkins (Thompson, 1979). Hayt, and the earlier Commissioners George W. Manypenny (Kvasnicka, 1979), Alfred Burton Greenwood (Roberts, 1979), and Francis A. Walker (Miner, 1979), were referenced in Part 2 of the *Report*.

education of the youth of that tribe" (p. 15). In this way, Crawford followed the lead of his predecessors: Indian education was one of his main objectives during his tenure as Commissioner. He had worked on education legislation in his native Pennsylvania before his involvement in federal Indian Affairs, and he had a special interest in the education of Indian women (Satz, 1979b).

As a third demonstration, citizenship for Indians was a topic of great discussion within Congress and across the country, until legislation in 1924 finally made this a reality.[20] *Harper's Weekly*—"A Journal of Civilization" its masthead declared—wrote upon this issue in an editorial in 1891: "The Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior is a very interesting document. It discusses at some length, and with knowledge and intelligence, the question of citizenship, which can be avoided no longer, and it asks of Congress a definite determination of the actual status of the Indians as a basis of wise legislation and a satisfactory administration of Indian affairs" (Indian Citizenship, 1891, p. 934). The Senate and the House Committees on Indian Affairs had considered this topic for many years, and the *Serial Set* has an array of Reports reflecting this. By applying the same search and browse option selection process used for "leases" and for "Indian education", the "citizenship" alternative located, for the interval 1886 through 1919, seventeen documents produced on this subject by the Senate Committee, and thirty-two items created between 1823 and 1919 by the House Committee.

Congress, too, on occasion reexamined the entire history of the government's interactions with the tribes. In one such overview study—*Investigation of Indian frauds*(1873)—the House Committee on Indian Affairs compiled an analysis of such relations. The mandate for this investigation was made quite clear in the resolution by Representative John Peter Cleaver Shanks (Rep.—Indiana): "Resolved, that the Committee on Indian Affairs be authorized to investigate and report, in writing, at any time, to the House, the condition and the management by Government officials and other persons of Indian affairs with the Choctaws, Chickasaws, Cherokees, and other tribes, nations, bands, or individual Indians, touching the subjects of annuities, pensions, bounties, bounty-lands, and moneys paid under treaties and laws of Congress, and that said committee have power to send for persons and papers, and to take testimony to enable it to make such investigation and report" (p. 1). The index to this 793-page study devoted an entire page (pp. 754–755) to the entries for the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, demonstrating the robust linkage between Congress and various components of the Department of the Interior when it came to such inquiries into Indian affairs.

Finally, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these Annual Reports were employed to inform the public as well, and reactions to these studies reached far beyond Washington and the halls of Congress, frequently conveyed through local newspapers. Examples of this scope include:

- The distribution, in 1875, of General George A. Custer's criticism, of the Commissioner's remarks on Custer's expedition to the Black Hills,[21] that appeared simultaneously in Arkansas, the General's misspelled surname notwithstanding (Gen. Custar Indignates, 1875); in Texas (Gen. Custer on the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1875); and in Illinois (The Black Hills, 1875);
- The posting of the new Annual Report to its "Books of the Week" list by *The Congregationalist* in Boston (Literary Review, 1878);
- The consideration, by the *Morning Oregonian* in their article Wards of the Nation (1890), of "Red Men Being Americanized", while, at the other end of the country, the assessment of The Indian Question by the *Vermont Watchman and State Journal*(1878); and
- The discussion in *The Butte Weekly Miner* of education for Indian children (Urges More Schools, 1899), a topic reexamined by the *Christian Science Monitor* a decade and a half later (New Vocational Study Course to Aid Indians, 1916).

In effect, these few news items make obvious that the Commissioners' yearly analyses touched everyone everywhere everyday, and that these documents provided a very transparent window upon the thoughts and the conclusions of those administering the tribes of this nation. Today's new electronic interactive capability to interrogate the contents of the *Serial Set* for such an array of pertinent subjects facilitates the examination of Indian Affairs through the Annual Reports of the Commissioners, and through other *Serial Set* materials as well. The revised key to those important Reports, offered here, is designed to expedite such endeavors, by improving the advantage foreseen by J. A. Jones in 1955.

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An act making appropriations for the current and contingent expenses of the Indian Department and for fulfilling treaty stipulations with various Indian tribes for the fiscal year ending June thirtieth, nineteen hundred and six, and for other purposes (1905). 33 *Stat*. 1048.

An act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to issue certificates of citizenship to Indians (1924). 42 *Stat*. 253.

An act to establish an Executive Department, to be denominated the Department of War (1789). 1 *Stat*. 49.

An act to establish the Home Department, and to provide for the Treasury Department an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, and a Commissioner of Customs (1849). 9 *Stat*. 395.

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[20] An act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to issue certificates of citizenship to Indians (1924, p. 253) stated that "all non-citizen Indians born within the territorial limits of the United States be, and they are hereby, declared to be citizens of the United States."

[21] See "Survey of the Black Hills—Their value to the Indians" (1875).

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